

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 PRS-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 /019 R

DRAFTED BY PA:SACORNWELL:SAC
APPROVED BY PA/M:CFREEMAN
S/S:SGOLDSMITH
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
PA, S/S, S/PRS

-----121850Z 068634 /50
O 121825Z MAY 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT ANTHONY LEWIS OP ED ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES DATED MAY 12 HEADED 'A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE?'
2. ISRAEL AND ITS SUPPORTERS HAVE BEGUN A CURIOUS CAMPAIGN IN WASHINGTON. THEY ARE WARNING THAT A NEW ARMS SALES POLICY NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD, AS ONE STORY PUT IT, "LIMIT ISRAEL'S ABILITY TO RECEIVE MOD-ERN WEAPONS" FROM THE UNITED STATES. CONGRESS, MOVED BY THE ALARMS, SEEMS LIKELY TO ATTACH TO THE FOREIGN AID BILL LANGUAGE COMMENDING ARMS SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL.
3. THE CAMPAIGN IS A CURIOUS ONE BECAUSE IT IS DIRECTED, SO FAR AS I CAN SEE, AT A NONEXISTENT THREAT. THE ARMS
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SALES POLICY IS NOT AIMED AT ISRAEL. NOR DOES THE C;RTER ADMINISTRATION HAVE THE FAINTEST DISCERNIBLE INTENTION OF CUTTING BACK ON ASSURANCES THAT ISRAEL WILL GET THE WEAPONS IT NEEDS FOR ITS SECURITY.

4. THE ARMS SALES PROPOSALS ARE GENERAL ONES, DESIGNED TO CARRY OUT MR. CARTER'S REPEATED CAMPAIGN PROMISE TO REVIEW

A TRADE THAT HE SAID WAS GETTING DANGEROUSLY OUT OF HAND. THE SUGGESTED POLICY PUTS IN A FAVORED CATEGORY, FOR ACQUISITION OF ADVANCED AMERICAN WEAPONS, OUR FORMAL SECURITY ALLIES SUCH AS THE NATO COUNTRIES. BUT THEY HAVE HAD THAT TECHNICAL STATUS BEFORE NOW; IT HAS NOT AFFECTED U.S. SUPPLIES TO ISRAEL, AND WOULD NOT.

5. WHAT, THEN, ARE THE ALARMS AND EXCURSIONS ALL ABOUT? THE GUESS IS THAT THEIR TARGET IS NOT ARMS SALES BUT THE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT PROSPECT OF AN AMERICAN BLUEPRINT FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO SHOW JIMMY CARTER THAT ISRAEL HAS WEIGHTY SUPPORT IN CONGRESS, AND THAT THE SUPPORT CAN BE RALLIED IF HE TRIES TO IMPOSE A SETTLEMENT ON ISRAEL. THEY REPRESENT A SHOT ACROSS THE BOW: A PRE-EMPTIVE POLITICAL STRIKE.

6. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENT IS MOVING TOWARD AN OVERALL AMERICAN PLAN FOR A PERMANENT MIDEAST SETTLEMENT. MR. CARTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD OF SYRIA WAS A LONG STEP IN THAT DIRECTION. FROM IT AND OTHER CLUES THE OUTLINE OF AN AMERICAN PLAN IS VISIBLE: WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAEL FROM MOST OF ITS 1967 CONQUESTS AND CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN "HOMELAND," IN RETURN FOR ARAB RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND SECURITY PROTECTION BY SUCH DEVICES AD DEMILITARIZED ZONES.

7. THAT ISRAEL SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF HER FORCES IS INEVITABLE, AND EVEN MORE SO ABOUT CREATION OF WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST
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BANK. BUT IT IS QUITE ANOTHER MATTER TO SUGGEST THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS ABOUT TO USE THE THREAT OF ARMS CUTBACKS TO FORCE AGREEMENT TO SUCH A SETTLEMENT.

8. THERE IS SOME HISTORICAL BASIS FOR CONCERN ABOUT THE USE OF AMERICAN ARMS SUPPLIES AS A POLICY LEVER. AFTER HENRY KISSINGER'S STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY RAN INTO ISRAELI RESISTANCE IN MARCH, 1975, PRESIDENT FORD ORDERED A REVIEW OF OUR MIDDLE EAST POLICY -- AND THAT WAS PLAINLY A KISSINGER DEVICE TO PUT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL.

9. BUT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY IS, BY ALL APPEARANCES, TO THE OPPOSITE EFFECT. IT AIMES TO ENCOURAGE ISRAEL TO STEP INTO THE RELATIVE UNKNOWN OF LONG-TERM PEACE ARRANGEMENTS BY REINFORCING ASSURANCES OF AMERICAN RELIABILITY AS A SECURITY RESOURCE. THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING ON ISRAELI ARMS REQUESTS WITH THE ONE EXCEPTION OF THE CLUSTER BOMB, AND THERE THE DECISION WAS TO TRY TO LIMIT THE SPREAD OF THAT NEW WEAPON ALTOGETHER.

10. IN FACT, IT MAY BE JUST AS WELL THAT WE HAVE THE
CURIOUS BUSINESS OF THE ARMS HULLABALOO FROM ISRAEL NOW,
EMPTY AS IT IS OF ANY FACTUAL BASIS. FOR IT GIVES FAIR
WARNING OF THE AMERICAN RESOLVE THAT WILL BE NEEDED TO
LEAD TOWARD A MIDEAST SETTLEMENT.

11. FOR YEARS IT HAS BEEN CLEAR THAT THERE COULD BE NO
SETTLEMENT WITHOUT AMERICAN GUIDANCE. PRESIDENT CARTER
AND SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE ARE DARING, AS THEIR PREDECES-
SORS DID NOT, TO SUGGEST THE BROAD TERMS FOR PEACE. IT
COULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT BUSINESS THEY ATTEMPT IN FOR-
EIGN POLICY. AMERICANS SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE CONCERNS IT
RAISES IN ISRAEL--BUT NOT BE DISTRACTED. (END TEXT) CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS SUMMARIES, BRIEFING MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE107859
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SACORNWELL:SAC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770168-0017
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770564/aaaacdjz.tel
Line Count: 130
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 57c7b695-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2546009
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: SOPN, OVIP, (VANCE, CYRUS R)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/57c7b695-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009